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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: U.S. ELECTION PARTY DRAWS ATTENTION OF  
POLIS/MEDIA

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11. (U) The Embassy and American Chamber of Commerce co-sponsored an election party which drew a crowd of roughly five to six hundred attendees who watched the results of the U.S. Presidential election. Among the notables were newly-confirmed Prime Minister Grigol Mgaloblishvili; Mayor of Tbilisi Gigi Ugulava; Minister of Economic Development Eka Sharashidze; Deputy Foreign Minister Gigi Bokeria; Head of Analytical Section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Shota Utiashvili; Presidential Deputy Chief of Staff, Nato Kancheli; Chief of Presidential Protocol Zurab Davchiashvili; Vice Speaker of Parliament Gigi Tserateli; Former Opposition Presidential Candidate Levan Gadchichiladze; and New Rights Leader David Gamkrelidze. The Prime Minister used the opportunity to congratulate the United States on the election of a new President.

12. (U) Local press covered the event and conducted interviews with the Charge and event guests about the U.S. election, its outcome, and effects. There was live reporting on the morning and noon news programs, and the party was the primary story on the evening news. Georgian and American guests arrived before 7 am local time and filled the ballroom which carried a live feed of CNN and MSNBC for attendees to monitor results. In addition to the live television feeds, the party featured NDI and IRI information tables; internet stations where participants could check local election results or read up on the electoral college; recordings of the presidential and vice-presidential debates and comedy sketches from U.S. television and a mock election for Georgians complete with voting booths borrowed from the Central Election Commission.

13. (SBU) Georgian guests were happily non-partisan noting the strong support that Senator McCain, Senator Biden and Senator Obama had all offered to Georgia in the past. Many had woken up early to watch the returns come in and were impressed by the U.S. tradition of concession and acceptance speeches that called for unity and support behind the nominee. A number of guests mentioned that they had been impressed by Obama's grass-roots campaign and ability to reach out to young people. New Rights Leader David Gamkrelidze said that after studying Obama's campaign, he had met with the youth wing of his party to encourage them to get out and talk to the people in order to make the personal connections necessary to be a successful politician. Our Georgian counterparts all noted that they were looking forward to working with the new administration and were optimistic that Georgian-U.S. relations would remain a priority.

LOGSDON